Govt Salaries and Constructive Workers
Reg. No. B3092

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)
Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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"HARIJAN" PAPERS

Though from 1946 onwards the circulation of "Harijan" papers has progressively diminished, they paid their own way. But during the last two years the number of subscribers has been so reduced that the Navajivan Trust has been put to a heavy loss on their account, and there is no sign of improvement. The number of subscribers is falling continuously. Gandhiji was opposed to the publication of papers at a loss. And it is against the policy of the Navajivan Trust to accept advertisements. Hence, after considering the whole question from all sides, the Navajivan Trust has, with very great regret, decided to close down the papers from the beginning of their new year, i.e. March 1952. The subscribers and readers of "Harijan" are hereby informed that all the three "Harijan" papers will close down from March 1952. It is unnecessary to relate the contribution made by these papers in shaping the public life of this country. But in view of the number of their subscribers, the Trust has been compelled to come to the above decision.

19-1-'52 JIVANJI D. DESAI
Managing Trustee

PS. Knowing about the above decision of the N. J. Trust a request has been received from the Sarva Seva Sangh, Wardha, that it should be allowed to carry on *Harijan* (English) on its responsibility. Hence it is decided to entrust to the S. S. Sangh *Harijan* (English). The Sangh will carry it on in accordance with Gandhiji's principles and policy and without taking advertisements. Thus, from the point of view of subscribers, the net result of the decision is that not three but two — the Hindi and the Gujarati editions — will cease publication. The English Paper will continue to be published by the Sarva Seva Sangh, Wardha, of which agents and subscribers will please take note. I shall give detailed instructions for them in the next issue.

26-1-'52 J. D.

QUESTION BOX

Hindu Code Bill

Q. Even granting that it is necessary to reform the Hindu Law as prevailing at present, is it open for Government to make laws applicable to Hindus only?

A. This is a legal question. If there is a doubt about it, the Supreme Court should be appealed to.

Q. Since this law will be applicable to Hindus only, may not Muslims and other non-Hindu communities abstain from taking any part in the proceedings relating to its passage?

A. It is possible to make such appeal to them with a show of reason, but personally I would welcome their participation at all stages. But if I were a member of a non-Hindu community, I would abstain from voting on the Bill or any clause thereof, and would request other non-Hindus to do likewise, if I found that its passage or failure would depend upon the votes of non-Hindus. As a Hindu I would not make that appeal to non-Hindus. For when I concede to them the right of making changes in the Hindu law, I acquire the right to participate in similar legislations affecting their communities also. The same reasoning which applies against Separate Electorates is applicable here.

Bombay, 17-1-'52 K. G. MASHRUWALA

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HINDI ISHA-UPANISHAD

[The following is the Hindi translation of the *Isha-Upanishad* by the Hindi poet Shri Siyaram Sharan Gupta, which has been approved and adopted by Vinobaji. It is recited in his morning prayer during the present tour. It closely follows Vinoba's own Marathi translation, and is recited in a similar sing-song manner. Copies can be had from the translator, Chirgaon, (Jhansi, U. P.), at six pies per copy, exclusive of postage. — K.G.M.]

ॐ पूर्ण है वह पूर्ण है यह,
पूर्णसे निष्पन्न होता पूर्ण है।
पूर्णमें से पूर्णको यदि लें निकाल
शेष तब भी पूर्ण ही रहता सदा।

(१)

ॐ ओशका आवास यह सारा जगत्,
जीवन यहां जो कुछ अुसीसे व्याप्त है।
अतअेव करके त्याग अुसके नामसे
तू भोगता जा वह तुझे जो प्राप्त है।
पर-वित्तकी मनमें न रख तू वासना।

(२)

करते हुअे ही कर्म अिस संसारमें
शत वर्षका जीवन हमारा अिष्ट हो।
तुझ देहधारीके लिअे पथ अेक यह,
अतिरिक्त जिससे दूसरा पथ है नहीं।
होता नहीं है लिप्त मानव कर्मसे,
अुससे चिकटती मात्र फलकी वासना।

(३)

मानी गअी हैं योनियां जो आसुरी,
छाया हुआ जिनमें तिमिर घनघोर है,
मुड़ते अुन्हींकी ओर मरकर वे मनुज
जो आत्मघातक शत्रु आत्मज्ञानके।

(४)

चलता नहीं, फिरता नहीं, है अेक ही
वह आत्मतत्व सवेग मनसे भी अधिक,
अुसको कहीं भी देव घर पाते नहीं,
अुनको कभीका वह स्वयं ही है धरे।
वह अुन सभीको, दौड़ते जो जा रहे,
ठहरा हुआ भी छोड़ पीछे ही गया।
वह "है", तभी तो संचरित है प्राण यह,
जो कर रहा क्रीड़ा प्रकृतिकी गोदमें।

(५)

वह चल रहा है और वह चलता नहीं,
वह दूर है, फिर भी निरन्तर पास है।
भीतर सभीके बस रहा सर्वत्र ही,
बाहर सभीके है तदपि वह सर्वदा।

(६)

जब जो निरन्तर देखता है, भूत सब
आत्मस्थ ही हैं, और आत्मा दीखता
सम्पूर्ण भूतोंमें जिसे, तब वह पुरुष
अूबा किसीके प्रति नहीं रहता कहीं।

(७)

ये सर्वभूत हुअे जिसे हैं आत्ममय,
अेकत्वका दर्शन निरन्तर जो करे,
तब अुस दशामें अुस सुधीजनके लिअे
कैसा कहां क्या मोह, कैसा शोक क्या?

(८)

सब ओर आत्मा घेरकर आत्मज्ञ सो
है बैठ जाता, प्राप्त कर लेता अुसे, —
जो तेजसे परिपूर्ण है, अशरीर है,
यों मुक्त है तनुके व्रणादिक दोषसे,
त्यों स्नायु आदिक देहगुणसे भी रहित —
जो शुद्ध है, बेधा नहीं, अघने जिसे।
वह क्रान्तदर्शी, कवि, वशी, व्यापक, स्वतन्त्र
सब अर्थ अुसके सध गये हैं ठीकसे
सुस्थिर रहेंगे जो चिरन्तन कालमें।

(९)

जो जन अविद्यामें निरन्तर मग्न हैं,
वे डूब जाते हैं घने तमसान्धमें।
जो मनुज विद्यामें सदा रममाण हैं,
वे और घन तमसान्धमें मानो धंसे।

(१०)

वह आत्मतत्व विभिन्न विद्यासे कथित,
अेवं अविद्यासे कथित है भिन्न वह।
यह तथ्य हमने धीर पुरुषोंसे सुना,
जिनसे हुआ अुस तत्वका दर्शन हमें।

(११)

विद्या, अविद्या — अिन अुभयके साथमें
हैं जानते जो मनुज आत्मज्ञानको,
अिसके सहारे तर अविद्यासे मरण
वे प्राप्त विद्यासे अमृत करते सदा।

(१२)

जो मनुज करते हैं निरोध-अुपासना,
वे डूब जाते हैं घने तमसान्धमें।
जो जन सदैव विकासमें रममाण हैं,
वे और घन तमसान्धमें मानो धंसे।

(१३)

वह आत्मतत्व विकाससे है भिन्न ही
कहते अुसे अेवं विभिन्न निरोधसे।
यह तथ्य हमने धीर पुरुषोंसे सुना,
जिनसे हुआ अुस तत्वका दर्शन हमें।

(१४)

ये जो विकास-निरोध, — अिन दोके सहित
हैं जानते जो मनुज आत्मज्ञानको,
अिसके सहारे मरण पैर निरोधसे
पाते सदैव विकासके द्वारा अमृत।

(१५)

मुख आवरित है सत्यका अुस पात्रसे
जो हेममय है, विश्व-पोषक हे प्रभो,
मुझ सत्यधर्माके लिअे वह आवरण
तू दूर कर, जिससे कि दर्शन कर सकूं।

(१६)

तू विश्वपोषक है तथा तू ही निरीक्षक अेक है,
तू कर रहा नियमन तथा तू ही प्रवर्त्तन कर रहा,
पालन सभीका हो रहा तुझसे प्रजाकी भांति है,
निज पोषणादिक रश्मियां तू खोलकर मुझको दिखा,
फिरसे दिखा अेकत्र त्यों ही जोड़ करके तू अुन्हें।
अब देखता हूं रूप तेरा तेजयुत कल्याणतम,
वह जो परात्पर पुरुष है, मैं हूं वही।

(१७)

यह प्राण अुस चेतन अमृतमय तत्वमें
हो जाय लीन, शरीर भस्मीभूत हो।
ले नाम औश्वरका अरे संकल्पमय
तू स्मरण कर, अुसका किया तू स्मरण कर,
संन्यस्त करके सर्वथा संकल्प निज
हे जीव मेरे, स्मरण करता रह अुसे।

(१८)

हे मार्गदर्शक दीप्तिमन्त प्रभो, तुझे
हैं ज्ञात सारे तत्व जो जगमें ग्रथित।
ले जा परम आनन्दमयकी ओर तू
ॠजु मार्गसे, हमको कुटिल अघसे बचा।
फिर फिर विनय नत नम्र वचनोंसे तुझे।

शांति मन्त्र

ॐ पूर्ण है वह पूर्ण है यह,
पूर्णसे निष्पन्न होता पूर्ण है।
पूर्णमें से पूर्णको यदि लें निकाल
शेष तब भी पूर्ण ही रहता सदा।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

VINOBAJI'S ADVICE TO VILLAGERS

On 5-1-1952 Vinoba reached Chamraula, a small village of Bareilly District (U.P.). The people are devout and God-fearing. The whole village had assembled to welcome Vinobaji with great eclat. But the children outnumbered the rest of the crowd. Vinoba started talking with the boys.

"Do you know the purpose of my coming here?"

One boy stood up and answered: "You have come to receive land-gifts."

"Well, whom shall I ask gifts from?"

"From the people."

"From which people?"

"From those who possess land."

"To whom shall it be distributed?"

"To those who do not possess it."

The boys looked bright. Vinoba then said: "God has created water, air and sun for us all. Therefore we are all entitled to its free use. Similarly, every one should be entitled to use land, which is His creation."

There was congregational spinning at 3 p.m. It was followed with his speech. Referring to land, Vinoba said, "If I say that this land belongs to me, I am a sinner. You give water to anyone who asks for it. If you do not quench his thirst you commit a sin. The same is applicable to land also. Those who get land receive an object-lesson in love. Love begets love and hatred begets hatred. If your face is dirty, it will reflect dirt in the mirror, and if the face is clean it will look clean in it. This world is a big mirror. We must see how we look in this world. What we sow, so shall we reap. If we sow *babul* seeds, we can never reap mangoes."

Continuing he said, "We add to our own happiness by making others happy. People say this Baba is taking immense pains. Just at present, I am suffering from a wound in my leg and have to use a bullock-cart; otherwise I travel on foot. Hence I am able to say that I am a king of kings. By walking about 1,200 miles I have gained 40,000 acres, which means provision of bread for 40,000 people. Their happiness gives me immense joy. If you make others happy, you will be happy; if you will share in others' sorrows, their sorrows will alleviate, and that too will increase your happiness."

Proceeding further, Vinoba advised the people about various things that they should do. "In every village there should be a regular reading of instructive literature. Just as we need food every day in order to live, so too, the mind must receive its food. While bread is the food for the body, knowledge is the food for the mind. Villagers should organize the reading of *Tulsi Ramayana*, the *Autobiography* of Gandhiji and *Gita Pravachan* (Vinoba's lectures on *Gita*). The peasant works the whole day and has no time to read for himself. If he reads, his eyes get affected. Hence every village should organize public reading. Secondly, they should give up all evil habits. If they cultivate the habit of listening to good things their village will change in no time. Thirdly, they should form a Panchayat consisting of wise persons to guide them. Fourthly, they should learn to work co-operatively and should eliminate all caste, creed and class distinctions. And finally, they should work for the Land-Gift Mission. They should donate land and persuade others to donate for this mission."

(Translated from Hindi) L. B.

TO THE MEMORY OF MAHATMA GANDHI

(*By Prof. Bernard Baum, M.A., Ph.D.*) *

Darkness dropped no calumny on light
For him; his gentleness was strong enough
For both. He knew the hater's need was love,
And giving it, performed the golden rite
By which heart after heart might glow to faith.
Though forked tongues preach to stone the tears
Of splintered selves, wedged in iron fears,
And love be mangled by the carrion teeth
Of *maya* — disgorger of oil drums, gears
And politicians — that love still warms beneath
The fractured scene. Fed by his prayers,
The sages' fire brighter burns, melting the iron myth
Of freedom in the unbound self. Finally one hears
Merging voices in the *ashram* of his life and ritual death.

* The above poem has been received through Government of India's Information Services in U.S. Dr. Baum was until lately a Professor of English Literature at the State University of Iowa, U.S. He is a philosopher, poet and a novelist, and has been greatly influenced by Indian philosophy, and has made a good study of Gandhiji. The poem has been written for the occasion of the fourth anniversary of Gandhiji. — K. G. M.

HARIJAN

Feb. 2 1952

GOVERNMENT SALARIES AND CONSTRUCTIVE WORKERS

(*By Shrikrishnadas Jaju*)

A devoted constructive worker who is at present working in the Government Department writes to the Editor of *Harijan* :

"Some of the constructive workers of our institutions have gone into government services to carry out items of the constructive programme through government machinery. They lived a simple and frugal life in our institutions. I request you to give your guidance on the question of salaries which they should accept from Government for the proper discharge of their responsibilities to themselves and their family. Should they accept the payment to which they are entitled according to the government scale ? If not, what should be the maximum ? I would request you to prescribe the definite limit. In case these constructive workers accept high salaries allowed according to government scale, should they receive the same respect in our institutions and fields of work ? Many of our workers who have been joining government services for carrying out such activities as Sarvodaya schemes, Nai Talim, Uplift of Aboriginals etc. need definite guidance on this subject. One of the evils resulting from accepting high salaries in Government is that it creates dissatisfaction among other workers. The sense of devotion of the ordinary class of our workers weakens, and they begin to look for a chance to get into government services. But only a few can do so; most of them will have to continue in the institutions. I request you to kindly write on the subject at sufficient length in *Harijan*."

The subject raised in the letter is an important one in the cause of the service of the people. I have been requested by the Editor to respond to the correspondent's request. I do not know whether I should regard the request as an honour or a burden. Obviously, it is an embarrassing question. I fear what I may write may not please some. However I believe that a dispassionate discussion of the subject would be to the good of all concerned and I undertake to do it in a spirit of duty. Though the question has been restricted by the correspondent to constructive workers, it has a wider aspect covering the whole field of government service. I would therefore consider the question in its entirety.

In a letter to the then Viceroy, on the eve of his famous Salt Satyagraha, Gandhiji had cited the figures of the income of an average Indian and the pay of the Viceroy, and pointed out the yawning gulf between the two and the enormous injustice which it involved to our poor country. He wrote the letter as a representative of the Congress. The Congress Governments are now in power all over India. Are we to believe that Gandhiji's criticism applied only to then British Government and could not be applied to the present Congress rulers ? It is true that the currency has depreciated and the difference which now divides the average income of an Indian and the highest pay under the Government is not as big as it used to be. However even the existing ratio is not inconsiderable. It works out at about 250 to 300 times to 1. And it is a real pity that this inequality has been embodied in the articles of the constitution itself. It has fixed the salaries of some of the principal office-holders of the Government. Whatever happens to the country, whether its poverty worsens or otherwise, the constitution ensures that those salaries cannot be touched. It also provides — and this is a prevailing practice in almost all Government Departments — that whenever an officer is called upon to take over charge of a superior office even for a few days, he will draw the pay attached to the higher office.

This subject of the scale of government salaries has been discussed and commented upon more than once in the columns of *Harijan* and elsewhere. It has also been debated in the Parliament. But there is no indication that Government contemplate any scaling down. Just recently, in December 1951, Pandit Nehru answered the charge in a speech in the course of his election tour. From the report of the speech published in the newspapers, he appears to make the following points :

(i) It is not only government officers who receive high emoluments, but also industrialists, lawyers and others ;

(ii) The present equivalent of Rs 500 which the Congress laid down as the maximum salary is about Rs 1500 to 2000. After deducting the income-tax etc., the Prime Minister gets a net salary of Rs 1950/- only. For the highest official, the Public Service Commission has fixed the maximum of Rs 3,000/- per mensem ;

(iii) The President gets Rs 5000/- per month free of income-tax, plus certain allowances. The President is the symbol of the status and honour of the country. Not that a high salary is necessary for the maintenance of status and honour, but he has to appear in several social functions and programmes, and give large donations for charitable causes. He must live in a style which will befit his dignity and position as the head of the State. The people may, if they so choose, reduce his salary, but that will not make much change in the economic condition of the country.

Shri Jawaharlalji is the foremost leader of the country and it may be presumed that ultimately his view will prevail. But it is necessary to point out that there is another strong side to the question.

The first point refers to the very high incomes of persons engaged in industries, law and other lucrative professions. It is suggested that while there are other professions, which hold out prospects of handsome earnings really capable men are not likely to stick in government services at lower salaries. We have to admit that for the administration of a vast country like ours, a large number of capable men will always be

necessary. And unless the scale of pay is sufficiently high, government service will not attract them. So far as the ordinary class of government servants is concerned, there is some force in this proposition. But it does not augur well for the country if money alone is the most powerful attraction for the higher type of officers also. They must stand in a different class from the ordinary class of traders, merchants and industrialists. They are charged with the heavy responsibility of administering the country. It is in their power to make the administration good or bad. They are designated as public servants. It is not proper that men should join government services with the selfish object of making money. They should be inspired by the spirit of service. There should be scope for the fulfilment of one's ambition, but the acquisition of money is not a noble ambition for man. Moreover, it should be no small fulfilment of ambition for them that they get the power to carry on the administration of the country. This is an important difference between ordinary money-makers and public servants.

Another grave defect in the system of government salaries is that they continue to rise with every rise in the post. After a stage, there is no essential difference in the wants of upper class government officers of various grades. The rule of higher pay for higher office has no moral or equitable reasoning behind it. If a higher pay is offered because of the heavier responsibilities of the superior office, let it be remembered that a man can work only to the extent of his ability and every man is expected to work with his full ability in every office held by him. If it is argued that the rise in the pay signifies the recognition of the higher intelligence of the officer, it is not quite true; for promotions to higher posts are made, oftener than not, on grounds of seniority. The appointment to a higher office involving enlargement of administrative powers and area should be regarded as a sufficient recognition of and return for the talent of the officer. The holder of a superior office has not only to discharge the responsibilities of his office, he has also to inspire his juniors with the spirit of service to the country. He can do so only if he himself presents an example of service and sacrifice. Hence, having regard to the poverty of the country, it is but proper that the salaries of high officials should not exceed reasonable limits.

Even if there is some justification for paying high salaries to government servants, it cannot extend to governors, ministers, legislators and similar holders of special posts. They belong to an entirely different category. They are representatives of the people and go there with the avowed aim of serving the people. They are expected to guide and give a lead to the people. Why should they adopt a higher standard of living? Shri Jawaharlal Nehru has referred to the necessity of maintaining the honour and dignity of office, necessitating the allowance of a high salary. The question is whether the honour and dignity of an office is maintained by chaste simplicity or by display of wealth and luxury? The Britishers maintained a high and luxurious standard of living because they came to exploit the country economically, to overawe the people and to maintain their imperialistic rule. But can these standards be justified in the present day democracy and under India's cultural traditions? We have to remember that *rishis* and *fakirs* have been always held in greater respect in our country than kings and *amirs*. Even among rulers and the rich, those who live a simple and austere life are more respected and praised than those who live pompously. How can this conception of associating honour and dignity with wealth and display, do credit to a poor country like ours?

Many of the present ministers belonged financially to the ordinary middle-class, and lived quite simply before they assumed office. They did not hesitate to go on foot or travel third class. Why should they change their mode of living as soon as they become ministers? Many of them made great sacrifices during the quarter of a century of the struggle for Swaraj. They spent long periods of their lives in jails during which they could not earn anything. How is it that now they cannot do without fat salaries? Is it that sacrifice was necessary at that stage and now it is not? Our leaders feel a deep concern for the corruption prevailing in the administration, in the Congress, and in the country in general and make some efforts to eradicate the evil. May I ask, however, if these efforts can succeed without ascending the scale — or, shall I call it, the sharp pale — of sacrifice which alone can take us to the desired goal? Unless the leaders to whom the people look for guidance come forward to set the example of sacrifice, how can we hope for any purification amongst the people in general? Governors, ministers, and such other holders of high offices are looked upon by the people as the elders who set the pattern of right living. It is essential for the good of the country that they curtail their comforts, accept lower salaries, and live simply.

Shri Nehru has stated that the reduction of salaries would not make much difference in the general economic condition of the country. This is largely true. But it is not so much a question of effecting economies in the expenses. The question is how does it fit in with the conditions of want and poverty prevailing in the country? People tend to follow the ways of those whom they consider to be their superiors. If these superiors look for the maintenance of their honour and dignity in high salaries, others will naturally feel inclined to spend their talent and energy for earning money. There is the need to rouse in the people the urge for a morally pure life. And to that end, it is essential that the conduct of the elders must be of the kind and standard which will inspire the people with noble urges.

It may be granted for the sake of argument that the present scales of pay are reasonable for efficiency of administration. The question would still remain whether a person who does not need that amount, may also accept it. Certainly, there are many among them who have large properties which yield them enough income, or whose sons and brothers are quite able to maintain the family on their own earnings; in short, who are now fit to enter, to use an old expression, into the *Vanaprastha Ashram*. Why should they accept anything even though the Government be prepared to pay them in full? Could they not make even that amount of sacrifice for giving a proper lead to the people? There are a few persons who draw very much less than what they are entitled to under the rules, but they are so few that they cannot influence either the people in general, or other office-holders. Perhaps, such examples are even prevented from receiving publicity. It also appears that there are some, who would be quite willing to work on a lower pay, but they hesitate to do so for fear that it would displease their colleagues. The fault lies in the atmosphere prevailing in the government services. A change should be brought about so that while those who might draw their pay in full while those who have other sources or whose requirements are few might give up their salaries wholly or in part.

I think that the answer to the correspondent's questions can be inferred from the above discussion. Vinobaji has expressed the view that broadly the political set-up of the country would be made of three sides: viz; a party in power to carry on the administration; an opposition pursuing the policy of responsive co-operation and constructive opposition; and a third one which would be a body of non-party workers who would apply themselves to the service of the people without involving themselves in power-politics. The administration and the forces of democracy will be honest and free from corruption and act within proper moral limitations only to the extent that this body of selfless workers grows large and strong. A little thought will convince the reader that only the constructive workers can form the third side of the triangle. In a sense, everything which is conducive to the good of the country may be termed constructive. But generally the term is restricted to the work undertaken in the spirit of *ahimsa* and for the furtherance of the Gandhian programme. Among other things, these constructive workers are expected to be pledged to *aparigraha* i.e. non-possession. It is a virtue which should find an important place in their lives. Economic equality is bound to be one of the main features of a Sarvodaya society. Then how can they let themselves be tempted into accepting high salaries? They must take only as much as is necessary to meet their requirements, whatever may be the pay offered by Government.

The correspondent desires to have the limit of the maximum salary laid down. It is difficult to lay down a definite limit. Circumstances differ from man to man. Every worker must decide it for himself following his own conscience. If he decides to take more than he needs, he goes wrong. It will not be proper for him to increase his income or adopt a costlier mode of living after he joins Government. Rather, he should persist in his simplicity and set an example of a service-minded worker. Not only in respect of the monthly salary but in other facilities also such as travelling allowances, leaves etc. he should follow his own distinguished code of conduct. The government rules are a little too generous in all these respects. A constructive worker will not stoop to take any unfair advantage of them. He will charge from the Government only the actual amount of expenses incurred in travelling and the expenses should be consistent with his standard of living which has to be simple and frugal. It is reported that some members of the legislative assemblies make a considerable saving out of the travelling allowances they get from Government. It is a reprehensible practice. The money that goes into the government coffers comes ultimately from the poor. We must spend government money as frugally as we do our own.

However, everything said and done, let not those, who are able to live up to the right standard of simple and non-acquisitive life, look down upon those, who are weak and unable to resist the temptation or opportunity of living more comfortably or making some saving. Hence, the question of respect and prestige to be given to them in constructive institutions is irrelevant. The virtues of non-possession and simplicity will lose their value if they are stained by egotism and jealousy.

Sevagram, 25-12-'51

(Translated from Hindi)

SHRI VINOBA'S TELANGANA TOUR

XV

April 26, Turpalli — Nalgonda (Twelfth Halt, 12 miles)

A Pleasant Experience

On our way to Turpalli lay respectively Irven, Kotapalli and Sidampalli. At Irven, Vinoba stopped for a while to receive from Shri Ananta Reddi a gift-deed of 15 acres. Vinoba addressed a few words to the villagers asking them to cultivate and create love in the villages. We had now crossed the Mahboobnagar District and entered once again the district of Nalgonda. Everyone seemed to heave a sigh of relief. When we entered the village the cry that greeted us was: *Lo! Rama is come*. Now when we were departing the atmosphere rang with: *Rama is leaving; let us meditate on His glory*. There were similar receptions at the other two villages also, and we reached Turpalli — our destination of the day — at about 10 a.m. The way to the village, lined on both sides with *ketaki*, was most spectacular, for *ketaki* in that season of the year was in wild bloom.

Vinoba looked particularly pleased today. In the afternoon he is usually busy holding session with the visitors and complainants. Fortunately, however, there were no complaints against the *patils*, the *deshmukhs* and the

deshpandes, and he was free. Barring a few Harijan families nearly all had their own lands, and for the Harijans they had already collected about thirty-five acres. So Vinoba found some leisure and he issued out of his room into the open, there to join the young boys who were thronging the court-yard. Presently he was playing with them merrily like one of them. There was fun and frolic and we had a glimpse of, situated though we were so far away in time, of the sports of Krishna among the cow-boys on the banks of the Jamna. My eyes were moist with tears of delight and I really restrained myself with some difficulty.

In the evening Vinoba began his speech by congratulating the village on the comparative freedom from dissensions which it enjoyed. He was also pleased to know that most of the people in the village had their own lands. Very few had more than a hundred acres. Only some Harijan families were without any and for them they had secured about thirty-five acres. Thirty-five acres looked apparently a little too few. But it did not please Vinoba to find a situation, where large donations have to be received. For, that implied that the inequality and consequent injustice were also as large. On principle it was not proper that a man should have more than sufficient land. It did not do him any good. Great saints had said that after all a man really needed only so much land as may accommodate his body when it goes to final rest.

Insatiable Desires

Vinoba related a conversation he had with a landholder owning five hundred acres. He had pointed out that the owner had too much of land. The latter explained that they were four brothers and each had four or five sons. Hence, they had only twenty-five acres per every male. Thus he did not regard even five hundred acres more than sufficient for himself. The fact showed that if a man did not control his desire, it would go on expanding interminably, so that a man died but not his desires. Such soul did not enjoy peace. His ghost hovered round the earth even after death. If a person allowed his desire to get the control over him, it enslaved him and sapped his vigour. A person may succeed in getting rid of its stubborn grip, only if he strives to eradicate it with deliberation and determination.

Village Education

" A while ago when I was playing with the boys, the question arose in my mind whether the responsibility for bringing up these boys should rest on their respective parents or on the entire village. There was no difference between the son born to a rich man and the one born to a poor man. Both were equal manifestations of God and illumined their families equally well. If the village as a whole undertakes to look after its young children in the spirit of a parent to a child, the whole village would advance. That is the way to social progress and I place it before you for your consideration."

Vinoba next explained how they could look to the education of the village children. The rich sent their boys for education to the city. In the absence of any satisfactory arrangement to keep the boys in the city, even they themselves went and settled down there, so that the boys might be trained. Vinoba wondered why they did not pause and think over the matter. While they were so anxious about the education of their boys, they should be equally anxious about those other boys in the village, whose parents could not afford to send them to the city and who therefore must go without any education. So they should start a school in the village itself so that all may be equally trained. The lamp that one kindled in the house not only lighted one's home but the street as well. Similarly, the school would train their own children as well as those of the poor. Krishna stayed in Gokul with his chums. He played with them and learnt with them. They should consider for a moment what would have happened to Gokul if he had been sent to Delhi for his higher education.

The children had no caste, continued Vinoba, nor the distinctions of the rich and the poor. They were all equal creations of God. But the rich man attended to his own interests and neglected the wider interests of the village, and sent his boy to the city for education. The boy was urbanized and learnt to detest village-life, and took permanent residence in the city. He could not be friends with the villagers and he did not work in the village. He only put in his appearance there at the harvest time to get his share of the crop. But since he did not live in the village and did not attend to cultivation work, he failed to get as much as he should, and otherwise would. This led to ill-will between him and the villagers. And if the villagers combined against him he took alarm and sought police-aid. He thought that the people had all turned Communists, and were out to harm him. The police had its own way of dealing with the situation. It was certainly not one of love. The strength of the police lay in the baton which, they wielded. Ultimately it led the village to ruin and misery with the colossus of hatred stalking the countryside. So if the people wanted to build up a happy village, they must decide to provide for the education of the entire community of village-children in the village itself.

When the boys of the village thus grew up together, Vinoba explained, they would also work jointly on the land. There would be neither fear nor ill-will. They would live in active amity with their friends and invite them to share their joys even as Krishna invited his cowherd companions to share his butter and curds. Such a village would grow into a Gokul, a veritable heaven on earth. For what was Gokul but the common sharing of the entire village-wealth, whether it was milk and butter, or honey and sugar-cane or rice and *juar* ? When a man sat down for his meal all by himself like a thief, only the flies could flock in on his food. But if he lovingly shared it with his friends, it would taste sweeter. One can love one's friends, but one cannot love the flies. His instinct of love therefore remained unsatisfied. And, he was led to do many awkward things. He kept dogs and cats as pets and tried in vain to bestow his unfulfilled love on them. Thus the problem grew more and more complicated, once people strayed from the right path. It was obvious that it could be straightened and resolved only by practising the art of common living: common reading and writing and studying at a common school.

Vinoba then went on to explain the sort of school which he envisaged for the village. He said that in the school which he would set up, everyone would be required to work. The teacher and pupils would apply themselves willingly to some sort of productive labour and through work they would learn whatever was useful for them. At present the boys of the well-to-do parents who went to school lost their capacity for work. This was the reverse of education, because it resulted in the diminution of one's innate capacities. Therefore Gandhiji had said that our schools should hum with all manner of useful activities. The boys should plough fields, spin yarn and weave it into cloth. And along with work and through it they should also learn. Rich boys and poor boys, Brahman boys and Harijan boys should all work together in such a school and learn together. Such a school would lay the foundation for a new society free from social and economic inequality. Vinoba said he often thought of the various problems with which our society was ridden and the only effective solution which he could find for these ills was the starting of Nai Talim in the villages. Not only the boys but the adults too should be trained through Nai Talim. While the boys would learn at the school, the adults would learn in everyday life.

Dowry of a Well

A marriage had been celebrated in the village that day. Vinoba made a reference to it and advised the villagers to construct a well. It should be made a necessary part of a marriage ceremony. On enquiry Vinoba learnt that in every marriage they gave anything from five hundred to a thousand or more rupees to the bride. Vinoba said that these money-gifts should be stopped and replaced by the

construction of a well. India had a population of 36 crores. Assuming that on an average an Indian would live up to 45 years of age, the number of marriages in the next 45 years would be about 18 crores. If people acted on his advice there would be as many new wells by the end of that period. With the water made so abundantly available, fields everywhere would put on a rich and bright green. Land was insufficient in India, but the deficiency could be made diminished by making available the underground water. Underground water was like Saraswati, the invisible river. The beneficent power of this Saraswati would far exceed that of the Ganga and the Yamuna in the North, and the Krishna and the Godawari in the South. King Bhagirath brought down the Ganga from the heaven. They should emulate his example, work hard like him and dig up the Saraswati from the nether region. Every marriage must mean the construction of a new well. No persons should marry until he had sufficient money to construct a well. It would provide work to the labourers and create a ready and permanent source of water-supply. If even thereafter the married boy did not make use of his well it would be a gift to the village.

Warming up Vinoba related to his audience a story from Mahabharat in this connection. Once upon a time Narad paid a visit to Dharmaraj. After the usual salutations and blessings, Narad asked Dharmaraj about the well-being of his State. And one of the questions Narad put to him was: "I hope agriculture in your kingdom does not depend solely on heaven." Narad implied that agriculture which depended for water solely on the rains could not flourish. It must harness the underground water for its rich and secure growth.

A Fable about Precious Stones

There was wealth even underground. It has to be dug out. But the fools that they were, they gouged the earth not for water but for what they called "precious stones". He could not understand what earthly use could these stones be to men. They could not satisfy hunger or thirst. People explained fatuously that they were precious because they were beautiful. But then they should give them to children to toy with. Instead, they invested these stones with soaring values in terms of money and, since money could also buy grain, they were confronted with the absurd situation of a price of yellow or green or white stone standing as equal to enormous quantities of grain. This was rank folly, Vinoba said, but there it was. And it had come about because of the lure of money.

And Vinoba went on to give a fascinating story about how this disastrous nonsense had come to be accepted. Once upon a time a *kisan* was digging his field, and he came upon a glittering white stone. Wise that he was he gave it away to his son to play with. Now his son had a boy-friend, the son of a rich man. The latter asked his father to procure for him a similar stone. The father was in a predicament for he did not know where he could find it. Finally he went to the *kisan* and asked him to part with the stone in lieu of a large sum of money. The poor *kisan* fell a prey to the temptation and what was a mere stone was raised to be worth that much money. This process went further. For the stone was noticed by the king's prince, and he desired to possess it. The king gave a fabulous price to please his son. Thus this stone, the plaything of young boys, climbed higher and higher up in price until it now occupies the pinnacle of the scale of value. And those who helped it rise to that position have come to a sorry pass, where while a stone was priced, man was despised.

Concluding Vinoba once again exhorted the people to realize the importance of wells for our agriculture and promote their construction by accepting it as an essential feature of a marriage ceremony. The underground Ganga will bless the marriage and assure the prosperity and well-being of every couple.

(From Hindi) D. M.

TERRORISM IN SAURASHTRA

Terrorism is an age-old evil of Saurashtra. It has been repeatedly adopted by political discontents with disastrous effects upon the prosperity and moral and social progress of the otherwise very shrewd and intelligent people of that peninsula. It has often been practised continuously for more than a quarter of a century. But it does not seem that it ever succeeded in the end in favour of the terrorists.

It had been tried during the early British period, but had to surrender ultimately. It has made its appearance now, during the infancy of the consolidated Saurashtra State.

It is possible that these discontented men have some genuine grievance against the Congress administration, or that they want a different type of political set-up of Saurashtra from that created after the withdrawal of the British. But the history of Saurashtra itself and the experience of terrorists elsewhere should teach them that however long they might hold out, and no matter how many important or innocent lives they might take, ultimately it is the terrorists who have to surrender or be extirpated.

The dastardly murders committed by these bandits in order to terrorize the voters might affect an election here or there, but they are seriously self-deceived, if they think that the non-election of this or that candidate, or even of the entire Congress party, will make their position any better. No party that attains power and wants to govern will give quarter to terrorists. Not even those, who might be secretly encouraging them just now.

Terrorism is not the way of getting grievances removed or of bringing about a revolution. Even if they feel that ordinary constitutional methods are unable to help them, let them take a lesson from their own Saurashtrian, who showed how even a foreign Empire might be made to surrender by the power of non-violent Satyagraha.

It is extremely tragic that Gujarat and Saurashtra — popularly regarded as the home of Non-violence — should have displayed more scenes of disgraceful violence and irresponsible propaganda than other States.

Bombay, 24-1-'52 K. G. MASHRUWALA

CONTENTS PAGE

"HARIJAN" PAPERS	.. Jivanji D. Desai	409
QUESTION BOX	.. K. G. Mashruwala	409
HINDI ISHA-UPANISHAD	..	410
VINOBAJI'S ADVICE TO VILLAGERS	.. L. B.	411
TO THE MEMORY OF MAHATMA GANDHI	.. Prof. Bernard Baum	411
GOVERNMENT SALARIES AND CONSTRUCTIVE WORKERS	.. Shrikrishnadas Jaju	412
SHRI VINOBA'S TELANGANA TOUR — XV	.. D. M.	414
TERRORISM IN SAURASHTRA	.. K. G. Mashruwala	416

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